

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation, and a quid-pro-quo. The Bush administration presses for a relaxation of media ownership rules, and a media company seeks to help elect a friendly administration through airing a politically motivated movie right before the election. The fact that they are pre-empting regular programming is particularly disturbing and is clearly not in the public's interest.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.